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A NIGHT IN THE CATACOMBS OF THE UPPER NILE.

No feature in the mental idiosyncrasy of the Egyptians is so striking as their passion for excavating, building, and burrowing under ground. Half the lives of the thoughtful classes of the community, who were so numerous and influential as to impress their peculiarities on the whole nation, was passed in subterraneous apartments, nominally constructed for the reception of the dead, but in reality for the use of the living, who loved the grim silence and solitude which the company of mummies and the perpetual presence of death insured to the frequenters of the tombs. Accordingly, there is scarcely a mountain, rock, or precipice in any portion of the Nilotic Valley, or of the desert bordering upon it, which does not contain suites, more or less spacious, of sepulchral chambers, adorned with sculpture, painted in brilliant and gorgeous colours, abounding with symbolical representations, with deep shafts, long corridors, endless flights of steps, descending, winding, branching off into the bowels of the earth, with here and there niches for coffins, carved and decorated divans for the living, and beautiful tables running along the wall, on which to arrange the wines, fruits, and viands designed to comfort and exhilarate the worshipper of Isis and Osiris.

Once, while roaming about the wastes of Nubia, we learned that there existed far out in the desert something which our informants called a ruin, though whether below or above ground they were unable to decide. Respecting its exact distance from the river, they were equally uncertain; some estimating it at one hour, some at three or more. Arriving shortly after dark at the village which was to form our starting-point, we found the whole population asleep, or determined to appear so, with the exception of four young men, whom we heard, while groping our way through the dusky streets, or rather lanes, talking and laughing in a ruinous unlighted building. Our Arab servants, who cherished strong prejudices against all inhabitants of the 'black countries,' argued that they must be murderers, or at least brigands, otherwise, they could have no motive for sitting together in the dark, after all honest people were in their beds. But brigands or no brigands, they would probably consent for money to become our guides,

which, when we had knocked and made known our wishes, they cheerfully did. It must be said for wild and eastern men in general, that they seldom profess knowledge when conscious of ignorance; so that if they undertake to conduct you to any place, you may be tolerably certain they are familiar with the road, though about distances their ideas are often extremely misty. On the present occasion, our difficulties were multiplied by the circumstance, that the guides understood not one word of Arabic, while, with the exception of an ignorant river-pilot, we were all equally unacquainted with the Noubah language. Scanty and unsatisfactory, therefore, was our intercommunication; but as they affirmed unhesitatingly that they could lead us to the ruins of which we were in search, we bade them move on, and followed. Soon the village was left behind, and the desert entered upon—the desert, vast, monotonous, lighted up by the most brilliant moon, its sand-hills piled up and modelled by the winds, clothed in some places with tamarisk or the oriental willow, alternating at intervals with barren rocks, rising into peaks, or cloven into vast fissures, through which we wound our way, immersed at times in deep shadow, with the yawning mouths of caverns on either hand. Our attendants, little used to walking over deep sand or rugged rocks, presently became tired, and their weariness perhaps induced them to question us as to whether or not we had brought our firearms with us, since they apprehended that our guides might possibly have a design upon our lives, as they often whispered together, and laughed. Our rifles, our pistols, even our daggers, had been left behind, so that, had the Nubians intended mischief, they had an excellent opportunity; but they entertained no such idea; and at length, after a weary march of at least three hours, stopped at the foot of a low mountain, declaring us to be now in presence of the object of which we were in search. As neither column nor obelisk, nor wall nor gateway anywhere appeared, we began to suspect they were really mocking us, and being roused to anger, fiercely demanded what they meant. The men then, with their spears, pointed to an Egyptian cornice cut in the rock, and all but covered with sand, which, kneeling down, they vigorously removed with their hands, till they laid open a small doorway, through which, being the most eager of the party, I forced my way, like the Egyptian deity, Agathodemon, wriggling into a hole.

Once entered, I beheld by my wax taper one of the most astonishing sights I had ever witnessed. Standing on the sand-mounds, blown in by the winds, my head nearly touched the roof, which was completely instinct with life; myriads of small creatures, with sooty wings, open mouths, and glittering bead-like eyes, hung quivering and trembling from the rock, detaching themselves gradually, and darting madly hither and thither in the unaccustomed light. Leaving my companions to work their way through the sand at their leisure, I advanced, with more than my wonted caution, into the cavern. Nor was caution at all unnecessary, for I had not proceeded many yards before a large square mummy-pit yawned before me. Into this I threw a stone, and by its frequent bounding and rebounding from side to side, conjectured that the depth of the shaft could not be less than seventy or eighty feet. After warning my friends of the danger, I skirted the pit, and then paused in profound admiration of the grandeur, extent, and magnificence of this subterranean palace, constructed by the lavish industry of the Egyptians in an out-of-the-way mountain, which they who quenched their thirst at the Nile could have seldom had occasion to visit, unless—which is not improbable—all this portion of the wilderness had been rendered fertile by their genius and energy. The tamarisks, the willows, and the mimosa, still growing on several hillocks and hollows, testified to the practicability of such a transformation.

After gazing round me for several minutes, I discerned a square opening in the rock, leading to a lower suite of apartments; and after estimating the depth, which seemed to be from fifteen to eighteen feet, I leaned forwards with my hands on the sides of the opening, and leaped down, followed by a torrent of bats, all apparently intent upon extinguishing my wax taper, and at length, to my no little annoyance, succeeded. They now considered they had got me all to themselves; and as I stooped to grope about for the candle, I felt them sprawling thick upon the ground, and put my thumb and fingers into their open mouths, while others of their brethren crawled over my head into my bosom, and down the back of my neck, their cold clammy touch making me shiver with disgust. Into these halls and corridors, no light but that of a torch or taper had ever penetrated since the creation; around me was the true Egyptian darkness—a darkness which could be felt, since it weighed upon the spirits, and made the eyeballs strain to catch a glimpse of something visible and tangible. I picked up stones, and threw them in various directions, and as, however far they went, they struck against no rock or wall, but always fell on the sandy or stony floor, I conjectured that I stood in the midst of a vast hall, the pavement of which might be pierced with mummy-pits or other dangerous cavities. Beginning to be alarmed, since I knew not how to advance or retreat, I shouted with all my might to my companions, who, not knowing what course I had taken, had probably turned off into other galleries, never supposing I could have descended into that chasm. Whether they came to my aid or not, there was one circumstance which inspired me with the hope that I might find an exit from that dismal den—this was a slight current of air which now and then breathed upon me. Exploring the floor carefully, now with my feet, and now with my hands, I moved towards the point from which the air came, but, to my dismay, the little refreshing breeze ceased to blow, and then, a few seconds afterwards, appeared to come from behind. I now resumed my former practice of throwing stones, and at length found that they struck against a wall, which turned out, however, when I reached it, to be only the face of a large square pillar, designed to support the weight of the superincumbent mountain. On a low projection of this pillar I sat down to consider what was next to be done. If I

sat there till morning, the return of day would not improve my condition. The stones which strewed the floors were too soft to afford the least spark of fire by collision; all the means of striking a light were with my Arab servants, who, I feared, had given me up for lost, and retreated from the catacombs. At this idea, a bewildering terror came over me, and I rose, and straining my voice to its utmost pitch, sent what resembled a loud roar through the cavern. The echoes took it up, and carried it right and left, till it became fainter and fainter, and gradually died away in the distance. Visions and phantasms then took possession of my mind. I beheld the slope of a mountain capped with snow, and in a sheltered nook near its base, a house, with children, overlooked by a woman, playing on the green-sward before it. A baby lay among roses near the woman's feet, who alternately gazed at it and at the page of a book which it was clear she was not reading. Upon this scene I gazed with deep anguish, since it seemed to be the last glimpse I should ever obtain of those figures. Fancy then carried me higher up the mountain, towards where the avalanches roll and roar; and as I mounted, one of the most enormous bulk appeared to be loosened from its seat, and to be launched like lightning down the steep declivity I was toilsomely climbing. It struck, it overwhelmed, it stunned me—I lost all sensation. When I escaped from the folds of this hideous vision, I beheld my Arab servants, each with a light in his hands, standing before me, and inquiring how it happened that I had lost myself, and proceeded to so great a distance in the dark.

It was immaterial. We now found ourselves in an immense excavation, whose sides, pillars, and niches were glowing with strange imagery, painted in bright colours, and representing, as we conjectured, the passage of the soul from earth to Hades. Descending from amid trees and flowers along a dreary path, the spirit, dim, shadowy, almost colourless, followed two wolf-headed conductors into the presence of the subterranean king, who was to pronounce judgment upon it, and assign it an abode, blithe and joyous, or portentously dismal, according to the tenor of its career on earth. The spirit in question happening to be one of the fortunate, soon passed its examination, and was received by two ladies, who led it by the hand into a place abounding with all those delights upon which the ancient Egyptians set especial value: wine, fruits, flowers, all sorts of delicious viands, choruses of women, dancing in circles, while others of the same sex played upon golden harps, which, from their open mouths, they appeared to be accompanying with their voices. At this reception, the spirit seemed to lose the tenuity of its figure, and was plumped out to respectable dimensions, while its face beamed with joy. Here the artist had stopped short, either because his activity had been arrested by death, or wishing to abandon to the imagination the remainder of the scene. In a sculptured niche close at hand, we discovered a gorgeously painted coffin, with a face of rare beauty delineated on the lid, having long, black, sleeping eyes, a straight nose, high forehead, and rich, pouting lips, resembling those of a Macedonian rather than of an Egyptian woman; for the chin, too, was Greek—that is, exquisitely rounded, dimpled, and rising over a neck never surely beheld among the genuine natives of the Nilotic valley. Should we find the mummy within? And if we did, would it answer the flattering indications of the exterior? The discovery was soon made that the coffin had never been opened; and so much like one solid block of wood had time and thick paint rendered it, that it was with no little difficulty we discovered the point of junction between the lid and the coffin. The want of hammers and chisels would have rendered our discovery of no avail, had not our Nubian guides drawn forth heavy crooked daggers from beneath their armpits—one of which I purchased on the spot,

and still possess—and suggested the possibility of opening the sarcophagus with them. This we at length did. The mummy, properly speaking, was not visible, being concealed by a thick investiture of swaths and bandages, enveloping its form obliquely, while its face was represented by a painted mask of rare beauty. Round the throat was a necklace, and on the breast a chain of gold beads, exquisitely formed and chased, of which we robbed the mummy.* We were, however, thieves of some conscience, for after having appropriated the necklace and the beads, with a blue porcelain ring, worn probably in life by the deceased lady, we replaced the lid, restored the coffin to its niche, and left it either to become a prey to the next travellers from Europe, or to remain there in silence and quietness till the great Osirian resurrection.

It so happens that the Egyptians, even in their sepulchres, where the mysteries of life and death are strangely mingled, invest their spirits with attributes which will not bear to be spoken of. In one place, the imagination is borne up to the highest level of the sublime; in another, it is dashed suddenly to earth in the most material way. Bodies mutilated in war are piled up before barbarous monarchs; decapitated trunks lie prostrate on the floor, while the heads which have been severed from them are heaped, grim and ghastly, in a corner. Some attempts are occasionally made to suggest an ethnological distribution of the races whose deeds are celebrated on the walls of these tombs; for where the painters were real Egyptians, we find groups of red men driving forward other groups of white, yellow, or black men, as captives or slaves. By the white men they are supposed to have designated their Macedonian masters; in which case the tombs are of recent construction, while the yellow men represent Persians or other Asiatics. A strong objection to this theory, however, is found in the fact, that among the oldest tombs in Thebes, excavated and painted, in all likelihood, before the siege of Troy, groups of white men are discovered, who may therefore be merely meant to represent white strangers wrecked by storms on the Egyptian coast, and sold as slaves to the princes and grandees of the Thebaid.

When we had sufficiently examined the paintings, we entered a long corridor, which, after ascending and descending for many hundred yards, terminated in a small chamber, in which we noticed a mummy-pit, filled with large stones to the top. In the wall was a hole, about four feet and a half from the ground, which looked into another tomb, for through it we could discern long suites of painted passages and apartments. After much consultation, and many tempting proposals made to the Nubians and Arabs, no one would consent to be thrust through that hole into the neighbouring tomb: some pretended fear of ghouls and efrits, others refused to explain the ground of their apprehensions. I then volunteered, and having been raised to a horizontal position, my head and neck were thrust through the opening in the wall, but no efforts of my friends sufficed to propel my shoulders after them. Growing apparently weary of keeping my body straight, they were on the point of breaking my neck, when, by a violent effort, I forced back my head out of the opening, and dropped among the piles of rubbish. The twinge I then felt in my spine seems to be renewed as I write, as well as the anger with which I reproached my friends and followers for their disregard of my life. Hunger and fatigue now made us think of a retreat; but it was easier to resolve upon it than to make it, for so numerous were the passages, corridors, flights of steps, and suites of chambers we had traversed, that no exit for a long while appeared. At length

we arrived in the great hall, whose roof rose into the mountain far beyond the reach of the light afforded by our tapers and torches, as well as of the stones which, with strong arms, we cast upwards in search of it. It was the opinion of some of our party that, in this instance, the Egyptians had taken advantage of an immense natural cavern in forming this dome, which for height and breadth exceeded the largest cathedrals in the world. Under the impulse of keen appetite, the taste for the picturesque, however, became faint; so, in spite of the great antiquarian attractions, we hurried towards the exit, and soon found ourselves in the keen, sweet, elastic, refreshing air of the desert. Here we enjoyed a spectacle which threw all the labours of the Egyptians completely into the shade—this was the dawn, which was just then beginning to spread its white skirts over the eastern sky. We forgot the dangers we had passed, forgot our hunger, forgot everything, and climbed the rocky pinnacles of the nearest hill to witness the most glorious show which nature has to present. Along the line of the horizon, just where the eastern desert comes in contact with the sky, a bright flush, every moment becoming more and more luminous, surged up into the firmament, changing rapidly from white to yellow, from yellow to deep saffron, from saffron to pink, to crimson, to purple, till the whole mighty arch of the Orient heaven became one blaze of intermingled colours, flashing, glittering, quivering, as if all the Auroras of the pole had been suddenly thrown together. Not a word escaped from the lips of any one present. In silent astonishment, bordering possibly on adoration, Arab, Nubian, European, gazed at the precursors of the sun, beautiful beyond description, thrilling, absorbing, overawing, till the vast fiery disc, more resplendent than molten gold, and absolutely blinding through its brightness, thrust up its dazzling rim above the edge of the desert, and in a moment the full day shone upon the earth.

The contrast between the interior of the catacombs, smelling of bats, coffins, mummies, decaying gums, cere-cloths, and wood crumbling under the influence of time, and the buoyant, elastic, etesian breezes blowing up the valley, and diffusing themselves softly over the waste, could hardly be surpassed. Yet it is worthy of remark, that there are no deleterious miasmata in Egyptian tombs. No one was ever the worse for breathing the atmosphere they contain. I have slept whole weeks in the midst of coffins, all containing corpses, and never experienced the slightest inconvenience, though the air occasionally appears close, and on that account, but on that account only, disagreeable.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.*

THE life of a man whom, living and dead, almost all men have agreed to praise, must be worth some care to study. His very popularity is motive enough to excite our interest in him; our eyes naturally follow the direction of Fame's forefinger. We are glad, therefore, to meet with one who claims to know more than others why the man is pointed at, and what is in him to be admired, especially when it appears that we have found not a commonplace guide, who will bore us, but a gentleman, who will tell his story genially and well.

That many memoirs of Sir Philip Sidney have preceded this which Mr Julius Lloyd has given us, he is himself careful to point out in his preface. If it had been only that in all these there were minor inaccuracies, which needed correction, a shorter process might have sufficed for dealing with them; the old picture might have been retouched. But he contends that

* Of this we were ourselves afterwards robbed, in our turn, in an Italian custom-house.

* *The Life of Sir Philip Sidney.* By Julius Lloyd, M.A. Longman & Co. 1862.

late research has thrown light from new points upon his hero's character, and brought it so far anew into relief that a new portrait altogether is desirable. This is his question rather than ours; we are concerned only with the likeness and the painting, and are fairly satisfied with both. The popularity of Sidney during his lifetime is certainly a marvel in its own kind. Here is a man who had all the virtues, and none of the vices of his fellow-men. He aimed at excellence in many things, and never missed his mark. All men loved him, and none envied. Wherever he walked, he was in the sunshine of men's praises. We are often tempted to think we are reading in a romance; nay, sometimes think that we must and will discover a weak joint in this good knight's perfect harness, if only to prove him to be real flesh and blood. Yet there is no need to question the sincerity of all this sumptuous praise; it is much of it praise of a sort which is not current amongst us now a days, and we have to express it in our modern coinage, to get a true notion of its value. But that he did attract all who came within the sphere of his influence, and did gain the affection and reverence, not only of the multitude, but of those who could take the true measure of a man, is beyond question. What, then, was the secret of this wonderful power? We believe that Mr Lloyd has rightly discerned it. In the first place, he was a man endowed with large intellect, active and versatile in mind. Secondly, his moral instincts were true and vigorous: he was high-minded, just, and noble. Thirdly, he was warm-hearted, full of kindly generosity, quick and gentle in sympathy. Lastly, he was the young handsome gentleman, practised in courtly graces and accomplishments. How far he will be held to have reached the standard of a great man, will depend, of course, upon where that standard is fixed. It is true that such a popularity as his does not presume the possession of high genius in any department either of thought or action; experience indeed might lead us even to suppose them to be incompatible one with the other. There is often in the character of those who tower above their neighbours a rugged and precipitous dignity, which makes them inaccessible, and isolates them from human sympathy. Enthusiasm is ready rather for those whose greatness takes familiar forms, which invites the eye by their changeful beauty, but never seem at a distance which is immeasurable. Sidney's power was not that which overawes; it was rather that which stoops to conquer men's hearts, and wins their allegiance by an irresistible charm, which comes of the kindly mixture of many noble elements in the character. We are not without an example of such a power in our own days, in a man who in very many points bears—by inheritance, we may almost believe—a striking resemblance to Elizabeth's 'president of nobleness and chivalry.' The name of Sidney Herbert will certainly not be a prominent one in the future history of these our times. He has had no such special influence upon the events which signalise them, as will justify an annalist, or even a memorialist, in placing him amongst the great men of the age; but yet he had that combination of high qualities which commanded from its greatest the most splendid praise. Often the men who do the world's hardest work fail to secure this kind of popularity. Perhaps it is not to be met with in the fields in which they labour; but at least it is significant of excellence, and excellence so rare, that we at once allow to its possessors their place amongst England's canonical worthies.

Of the service which Sir Philip Sidney rendered to the state, a very fair estimate has been taken by his biographer. Twice only did he become, in the strictest sense, a servant of the queen; first, on the occasion of a special embassy to Rodolph of Germany in 1577; again, in his appointment as governor of Flushing. When nominated ambassador, he was but twenty-two

years of age, but it was a mission which a young man might perhaps best discharge. Its ostensible object—that of offering complimentary condolence to princes on the bereavement which had set them on the throne—required only a delicate courtesy; while the covert and more important object of ascertaining the state of feeling on the continent with respect to reformation of religion, was more easily to be done *en parenthèse* by a young and intelligent man, who might be supposed to be inquiring for his private satisfaction, than by a statesman better known, whose questions might have been met with greater caution and reserve. His conduct of this embassy seems to have been in every way successful. Walsingham, in a letter to Sir Henry Sidney, notified his approval with more than official warmth of language, writing: 'There has not been any gentleman, I am sure, these many years, who hath gone through so honourable a charge with as great commendation as he.' Another correspondent, with a finer pen for detail, writes: 'God blessed him so, that neither man, boy, nor horse failed him, or was sick during this journey; only Fulke Greville had an ague in his return at Rochester.'

But to a biographer an additional interest attaches to these accounts of his diplomatic journey, in the records they furnish of the impression which Sidney everywhere left upon those with whom in negotiation he was thrown into contact; he rarely failed to secure their admiration, which in many cases rose to personal esteem, and in more than one instance subsequently ripened into a permanent friendship. Amongst others, 'Father William' of Orange, who was not much given to be romantic in his regards, and certainly was no bad judge of men, kept up intimate communication with him after his return to England. As governor of Flushing, he made the best of a position in which his powers were but limited, while his efforts were thwarted by the incapacity of his leader in the field, and his zeal chilled by the lukewarmness of the queen at home. Elizabeth really cared little for the result of the struggle, or she would have found a way at least to prevent her troops being defrauded of their pay, even if she could not have turned courtiers into able generals. Poor Sir Philip, whose whole soul was in the cause, which he rightly regarded as the cause for Europe of truth and of God, spoke out his counsel, complained loudly of the soldiers' wrongs, and wrote home letters of fearless remonstrance, such as risked him the loss of the queen's favour. Without doubt, this was to him a time of severe trial, but his noble letter to Walsingham shows how simply he could take it; indeed, it is in this crisis of his life that the grander traits of his character stand out. We might have known only his gentler nature, if the harder qualities had not been brought to light by these experiences of a soldier's life. His claim to the possession of high military genius is quite another matter. Mr Lloyd, we think, assumes it on what is, after all, but slender ground. The single exploit of the campaign, of which he has the entire credit, the capture of Axel, was certainly a most successful stroke. He seems also to have shewn considerable sagacity in his judgment of men, to have been most thoughtful of the welfare of those under him, and to have had in a high degree many other qualities which have distinguished great generals. But he simply had no chance of proving himself one, and therefore at best we can speak only on conjecture. But, indeed, whether in the field or in public life, his fame rests on no particular achievements, but rather on the impression which he left on his contemporaries, of being in all things the same noble and pure-minded and chivalrous man. Enthusiastic as their admiration was, we are at no loss to understand it, after reading the account given of his last days in the present memoir. This final picture his biographer

has drawn with great care and tenderness. We can hardly agree with him that it is a relief to turn from it to the epitaphs which were showered upon his hero's grave; we would rather watch him sleep in peace.

Sidney's contribution to our literature we have always thought to have been far less valuable than the influence which he had upon its development. Mr Lloyd's praise of *Arcadia* is, after all, only an apology for its blemishes; and in confessing that most readers would now find it tedious, he admits that it has little in it that is truly good. The world will with great complacency let it die. It was popular because he was idolised, and because it was fantastically graceful, and took the fashion of the day. Like his sonnets—which, however, are far higher in character—it will still interest those who are interested in him; but considered by itself as a work of art, its merits are slight enough. Nor did he himself set much value upon it; indeed, it was written rather as a pastime, Italian fiction lending him the model, and Plato contributing the better part of the reflection. But by his *Defence of Poetry*, in itself a well-handled essay—which we are bound to honour as being almost the first-fruits of English criticism—he undoubtedly rendered very important service to the cause of literature. This and his friendly patronage of men of letters make our debt to him really great; and when we reflect that he preceded those writers who have made Elizabeth's reign famous in the history of literature, we shall the more admire the boldness of his advocacy, and the enlightened judgment that directed it.

On the whole, we think that Mr Lloyd has done justice to the work he took in hand. He has shewn himself able to appreciate the strength as well as the subtle fineness of Sidney's character; he has also been most careful in sifting all accessible records; and with much skill and taste, has woven them into a pleasant memoir of a man of whom we are glad to know what may be known.

OUR BEST BEDROOM.

TWENTY years ago, I was a curate in the stirring and noisy manufacturing town of Twistley. The district church to which I belonged was an appendage to the ancient minster of St Mark the Evangelist, and was called a chapel of ease. But, in truth, there was little ease for any one connected with the edifice, whether lay or clerical. The church was a hideous, red-brick pile, adorned with a portico of raw, gray stone, and was always damp, draughty, and inconvenient to preacher and congregation. The district was large and unhealthy, comprising the worst portion of the suburbs, and the curates were miserably paid by doles from various bounties and societies. All things considered, there were pleasanter pieces of preferment in the church than that which I, in common with two other young clergymen, enjoyed at Twistley.

I hope these preliminary remarks will not be misconstrued; I do not desire to be taken for a clerical Sybarite, intent upon loaves and fishes, but negligent of the calls of duty. It was not the work that we murmured at, but the darkling atmosphere of smoke and fog, the moist air of the swampy plain and sluggish river, the dull, sad monotony of the ill-built town, and the phalanx of evil, on which our feeble efforts seemed to make no impression. In truth, a manufacturing town, twenty years back, before emigration and the repeal of the Corn Laws had lightened the burden of the poor, was not exactly an agreeable field for labour. Fierce and sullen discontent seemed the normal condition of many who are now in a healthier and kinder frame of mind, and we had no docile flock to attend to. It was scarcely pleasant to be involved in endless arguments, here with a furious Leveller, there with a disciple of

Clootz; to be reviled as hypocrites when we meant nothing but good, or to be dubbed oppressors when our hearts were aching at the sight of the unrelieved misery around us. We had little to give, for our pay was low; and it was no easy matter, in especial for Jones and myself, who were married men, to make both ends meet in a place so dear as Twistley. Lester, the other curate, was single, and had some allowance from his father; but we two Benedicts were almost entirely dependent on our salary, and our shabby black coats grew shabbier and whiter about the seams every day. Of preferment we had little hope; not one of us had any interest with those who had benefices to bestow, and we could not reasonably expect promotion for some years at least.

Thus far the prologue. My story really begins with the moist and fast-darkening winter afternoon when Jones and I were returning, wet and tired, from our rounds in the suburb. The day had not been a pleasant one. First, Jones had been posed in argument by a wandering lecturer, a clever and unscrupulous fellow, who had contrived to turn the laugh against the curate, though most unfairly in a logical point of view. Next, I had been severely mauled in controversy by a Mormonite cobbler, who pelted me with garbled texts, and refused to hearken to the right version. Thirdly, we had seen household after household hungry and despairing, without the power of rendering any material help, for it was a time of dearth, and great numbers were suffering cruel distress; so we were rather out of spirits, and walked slowly.

As we passed through the High Street, we met a tall, gentlemanly man, with bushy gray whiskers and a thoughtful face, who bowed to Jones, and looked hard at me, as he made way for us on the pavement.

'What a remarkable face!' I exclaimed; and indeed it was so. Very delicate were the finely cut features, very bright the eyes, and very pleasant the momentary smile of the stranger as he greeted Jones, but there was something curious and odd in the general effect for all that. I could not analyse the impression which this gentleman's look made upon me, but it was hardly an agreeable one.

'That's Mr Staunton,' said Jones. 'I wonder what brings him to Twistley on this damp, dark day. He very seldom comes over; and, indeed, it is a long drive to Staunton Dene.'

'Staunton Dene?' said I. 'Is not that the place we had a distant view of from the top of Carswell Hill, when we took that tremendous "constitutional" last summer—the grand old house among those noble beech-woods, with the park lying beyond, and the glittering lake peering out among the clumps of heavy timber? He lives there, then?'

'He lives there,' said my companion, 'at least till his nephew, the present baronet, comes of age, which I believe will be two years hence. He is his guardian, and has the management of the property, which is a splendid one, by all accounts. I have heard—but you know how gossiping tongues will run on—that Mr Richard Staunton was bitterly disappointed when his brother, Sir John, married very late in life. Sir John was a sad rake, though he could not do much harm to the property, which was strictly entailed, and it was thought that Mr Richard was sure of the title and lands. But Sir John astonished everybody by marrying some one much below his own station—the daughter of a tradesman or farmer, I believe—and when he died, three years later, he left a son to succeed him.'

'So this Mr Staunton had the care of the young heir?' said I carelessly.

'Not of the heir, though he had full power over the property,' returned Jones, who was a sort of living chronicle of all that concerned his acquaintances. 'The mother, a sensible, good woman, devoted herself

to the task of bringing up her son, and I have heard that the boy turned out very well indeed. Poor soul, she died six months since; and now I suppose the nephew must be under the uncle's care till he comes of age.'

All this did not interest me much, but out of civility to Jones I suppressed a yawn, and remarked that Mr Staunton had the look of a very superior man.

'So he is,' said Jones—'a great traveller, and took the highest honours at Oxford. He's a chemist, too, and well up in all the ologies, about which folks like you and me, Harper, know so little. I met him, years ago, at a watering-place, and he is very polite, as you saw, but we have never got beyond the preliminaries of acquaintanceship.'

We had by this time got past the region of shops and sound pavements, and were picking our way through the mud and rubbish heaps of the outskirts. My lodgings were in Paradise Row, and those of Jones in Waterloo Cottages. The Row was the nearer of the two, and I asked Jones to stop for a cup of tea. It was half-past five o'clock, and we had dined at one. Jones accepted my modest invitation, and we turned the corner, and beheld a tall gentleman, evidently a stranger to the locality, heedfully scrutinising the fronts of the little houses of the Row.

'Bless me!' exclaimed Jones, 'there is Mr Staunton again. What can he possibly want here?'

It did seem odd. Paradise Row consisted but of six houses, one of which belonged to the decent widow whose lodgings I and my family occupied; while the other five respectively appertained to a tailor, a dancing-master, a washerwoman, a master blacksmith, and a carpenter, who called himself, somewhat ambitiously, a cabinetmaker and undertaker. Unless Mr Richard Staunton, by some strange chance, required the services of one of these useful artisans or artists, it was unintelligible that he should be there. Staunton Dene had no connection with Twistley. It had its own cathedral town, nine miles off, its own market town within half that distance. It did not seem probable that the temporary master of the old Hall was likely to seek sartorial aid, or tuition in dancing, or even neat mangling and careful clear-starching in Paradise Row. 'Why, as I live,' said Jones, 'as I live, he's going to call upon you.' And indeed the tall gentleman was very deliberately manipulating the rusty little knocker of Number Six.

'Pooh! nonsense. It must be Mrs Parks that he wants to speak to,' said I, with a beating heart, though why my heart should have throbbed one second the quicker because a stranger of station and education paid me a call, may seem incomprehensible to those who do not know how welcome is any break in a monotonous life.

At any rate, Mr Richard Staunton, after a brief colloquy with the check-aproned little maid who answered his rap, was admitted, and the door closed on his tall form.

'Some mistake,' said I, ponderingly; 'I wonder whom he is looking for.'

Jones was quite eager to solve the enigma, so we hurried on, my companion suggesting as he went two hypotheses—one that I might have known Mr Staunton, and forgotten him; the other, that he might have known my wife in bygone days. At any rate, we found him seated in our small and dingy sitting-room, which looked all the smaller and dingier for his stately presence, while opposite to him sat poor Clara, trying very hard to keep the children quiet, and to seem at her ease. Clara was the best and dearest of little women, but she could not help feeling ashamed of the mean apartment and its poor furniture, as Mr Richard Staunton blandly surveyed it through his heavy gold-rimmed glasses. And yet there was something very winning in the manner in which the visitor rose to receive Jones and myself. He said, with a very

pleasing frankness, that he felt some explanation of his presence was needed—that I was no stranger to him, by report at least; and that he had lately seen my former college tutor, Mr Gidley, whose warm eulogiums on my classical attainments and moral character had induced him to seek my personal acquaintance, and to decide on making me the offer which he was about to suggest.

'Briefly, then, Mr Harper, I may inform you that Sir Frederick, my nephew and ward, has large ecclesiastical preferment at his disposal, and is, in fact, patron of four livings. One of these, as you are perhaps aware, is the valuable rectory of Bullingdon, on the banks of the Thames—I see, Mr Harper, you do know the spot.'

Know the spot! I should think I did, for my poor father had been vicar of a neighbouring parish; and as a child and a school-boy, I had been used to consider the rector of Bullingdon, with his glebe, his handsome house, almost hidden by rhododendrons and flowering shrubs, with the smoothest of lawns, the mellowest of peach-walls, and the snuggest of stables, as a prince of the church. The great and small tithes, taken together, made up a fat and comfortable income, equal to that of most deans. But this living had long been enjoyed by the Honourable and Rev. Cecil Dozey, D.D., and I knew that the old gentleman was still alive and hale.

'That benefice,' resumed Mr Richard, with a gentle sigh, 'is not vacant. But Oakleigh Parva, fifteen miles from this, in the hill-country, is mine to bestow, Mr Thrump, the late incumbent, having accepted a colonial bishopric. The house is pretty good; the garden is a fine one; the duties—though I hardly know the amount of the population—are not onerous; and the stipend is four hundred and twenty, which Easter-offerings may—I see you are impatient. Would it be worth your while to accept Oakleigh Parva?'

Worth my while! The room seemed to whirl round and round before my eyes, and I hardly know whether, in the excess of my surprise, I was not guilty of some very extravagant conduct. Consider, dear reader, I had but a hundred as curate of St Mark's chapel of ease, and a wife and two children pining in shabby-genteel poverty and failing health, and who was I to be indifferent to such a shower of gold, to such a sunbeam of prosperity! I think I was a little faint and giddy for a moment, for I remember Clara, crying herself, poor thing, but with tears of joy, loosening my neckcloth, while Jones—a good fellow quite devoid of jealousy, and who was magnanimous enough not to grudge this wonderful windfall that had fallen into another's lap—patted me kindly on the shoulder, and wished me joy.

'There is one condition, and one only,' said Mr Staunton, when I had recovered my composure, 'and that will not, I trust, appear a hard one. My nephew, Sir Frederick, as whose guardian it is my privilege to give away the living in question, is in delicate, almost feeble health, in spite of the very great care with which his excellent mother—of whom he has lately been bereaved—brought him up. He is a youth of very high promise, and of a gentle and engaging disposition, but perhaps oversensitive, and requires regular study and cheerful quiet. In two years, as you are perhaps aware, he will come of age; but in the meantime it would be well that he should be prepared by tuition and example for the high position which he must ere long be called upon to fill.'

How beautifully Mr Richard Staunton spoke, not pompously in the least, but with a graceful stateliness quite bewitching. A most superior man! Even his face, which I had not, to own the truth, much liked at first sight, now seemed to me to wear the impress of every noble sentiment and candid virtue. He was my benefactor; I saw him with a golden aureola round his intelligent head; and his bright, restless eyes, sharp chin, and beetling brows, no longer inspired

the vague dislike with which they had at first struck me. He went on to say that he should esteem it as a favour if I would take charge of the young heir, watch over him, read with him, and direct his studies. A horse, if I approved this proposition, was to be kept for the young man's use, and I was to receive for expenses, and my salary as tutor, two hundred and fifty pounds a year.

'In two years, Mr Harper,' said the guardian, 'your pupil—if you agree to my wish—will arrive at man's estate. He will owe a debt of gratitude to the kind care of Mrs Harper and yourself, which the mere money-payments can never cancel. And who knows—that old Dr Dozey, who must be much beyond the allotted threescore and ten, cannot always hold the living of Bullingdon. But there is one stipulation—Oakleigh, though healthy, is bleak, and my nephew is accustomed to a more sheltered abode—his room, if you please, *must* have a south aspect, and be airy and large, with a good fireplace.'

Of course we made no objection. If Mr Staunton had stipulated that we should camp, gipsy fashion, in the woods about the vicarage, I believe Clara and I would have agreed, so eager were we to get away to this new Land of Promise. I could not but feel that the salary offered for my care of the young baronet was a liberal one, and I had not much doubt that I was a sufficiently good scholar to be his tutor, though I felt rather awkward as I mentioned, that of modern tongues I was almost wholly ignorant. My wife, too, was a little nervous at the idea of the responsibility we were about to incur, but the beneficent visitor gently ridiculed our scruples.

'Sir Frederick,' said he, 'has been for years abroad, with his mother, and is well versed in modern languages, but his classical education has been comparatively neglected. His studies in history, too, are probably somewhat backward; but it was the dying wish of my poor sister-in-law—a most excellent woman—that he should enter parliament, and assume that position which belongs to the head of the Stauntons. And I am sure, that Mrs Harper, in spite of her youth, is the best of nurses in sickness, and'—

Just then in came the little maid with the tea-tray, and my wife looked a little confused and guilty at the sight of the thick bread and butter, the black tea-pot of Staffordshire make, and the mugs of milk and water for the children. But our guest put her at her ease by declaring himself tired and thirsty, and by asking, with a kind of gay seriousness, if I may use such a paradox, for a cup of tea. He had his cup of tea, praised its flavour, and accommodated himself amazingly well to the coarse brown sugar and the dull tea-spoon of German silver. During the meal, he talked away our remaining scruples so skilfully and genially, that we began (Jones included) to consider ourselves as predestined to develop the embryo greatness of the young county magnate whom our roof was to harbour; I assumed the didactic mien of a Johnson, while Clara put on her most matronly airs.

'And now, with your kind permission, I must tear myself away; your delightful society has already caused me to forget the flight of time,' said Mr Staunton at last; 'but we shall meet again ere long, and my solicitor, Mr Stokes, will call on you to adjust all needful formalities. Good-bye, Mrs Harper. Mr Harper, allow me to shake your hand; and yours also, Mr Jones; and you, my little dears, will perhaps make an old gentleman happy with a kiss.'

This last speech was addressed to my two little girls, aged respectively five and six; but I regret to state that these young ladies demurred, not from habitual coyness, for they were generally friendly enough with our guests, but from some curious antipathy which they had taken to our distinguished visitor. They clung to their mother's knees, cast furtive glances of infantine terror at the stranger, and

sobbed out a vehement refusal to make Mr Richard Staunton happy with a kiss.

But little Emma and little Kitty remained in the minority; the rest of us broke into a unanimous pean of praise, as soon as Mr Staunton's stately form, a little, just a very little, stooped by years and study, had vanished down the dim vista of Paradise Row. Our benefactor! could we say too much in his honour! Such a noble, kind-hearted, discriminating personage. He was so thoughtful, so considerate a patron, that his frank affability lightened the load of obligation which he conferred. His solicitude for his nephew's welfare, too, did him infinite credit. I mentioned Jones's scrap of gossip respecting Mr Richard's reported disappointment at his brother's marriage and the birth of the heir, and we all agreed—Jones as well as Clara and I—that Mr Richard was a pattern uncle and a model gentleman, and that common fame had basely calumniated his generous disposition. Presently, Jones wished us good-night, and went off, and we were left to wonder and to talk, and, I hope, to give thanks that gushed from the heart, and uplifted themselves whither thanks should be paid, for the wondrous fortune that had fallen to our lot. Tears rise to my eyes still, as memory carries me back to that happy evening, when we sat, hand in hand, my young wife and I, talking in whispers, because our hearts were so full of a joy that had something solemn in it. It was then that Clara, after the children had been put to bed, timidly told me of motherly fears, long hidden in her own bosom, lest Emma and Kitty should be taken from us; it was then that she bade me remark—me whose perceptions had been dulled by hard work and daily cares—how very thin and pale were those pretty little faces, how large and hollow the thoughtful eyes, how frail the tenure of life, of our darlings, sickening in the unwholesome air of smoky Twistley. They wanted many things, those tender blossoms, which my lean purse and our melancholy place of residence denied them. Better clothing, good medical care, pure air, playfellows, the fresh, bright country-life—these had been sorely needed; but what was unattainable to the curate's children, would be within the reach of the vicar's daughters. In the health, the plenty, and the freedom of Oakleigh Parva, Kitty and Emma would expand like flowers in the sunshine; and, to cut matters short, so it proved. Mr Stokes the lawyer came duly to communicate Mr Staunton's intentions. These were surprisingly liberal. He would advance me the money requisite to purchase the furniture of Mr Thrump, the outgoing vicar, now bishop of Calicut; this loan I might repay by moderate instalments from the stipend, and was to bear no interest. I scarcely knew how sufficiently to thank the worthy friend who had thus relieved me from the last of my difficulties, for I was quite unprovided with the necessary six hundred pounds, and should have had to borrow at a high rate, but for Mr Staunton's thoughtfulness.

I was presented and inducted by the bishop, on production of my testimonials, without any demur; and as soon as a curate could be found to supply my place, we took leave of our friends and Twistley, and joyfully removed to our new abode. The parsonage was a pretty house, in good repair, standing on a rising-ground, that overlooked the thatched roofs and farmsteads of the hamlet of Oakleigh Parva. The parish was wide, but the population small, and the church a thoroughly rustic one. There was no resident squire, but most of the land belonged to the Stauntons, whose ancestral residence, however, Staunton Dene, was nearly ten miles off, and was severed by other properties from this outlying estate. Oakleigh Parva had been a portion of the confiscated possessions of the church, and had belonged to the great monastery which stood at Twistley ages before a factory chimney arose in the place. The ruins of the succursal cell,

called the 'Monks' House,' were still distinctly visible in an orchard within rifle-shot of the parsonage. The gray stones lay in shapeless heaps among the gnarled old apple-trees. As for our new dwelling, it was very snug, though built in the reign of James the First; and the children screamed with delight when they saw its high-pitched roof, quaint porch, matted with sweetbrier and woodbine, the trim lawn and shrubberies, the huge old sun-dial, that had told of the sun's march for centuries, the big old tithe-barn, and the paddock starry with daisies.

The rooms were for the most part small, but very comfortable, with their oak wainscots, and the Rev. Mr. Thrump's furniture was better than any that we had had the use of during our married life. Anything so heartfelt as the happiness of Clara and the children, on settling, I never beheld. There was no great hurry, for it was yet early spring, and our important pupil was not to come to us till the summer, but still we thought it best to assign his room at once.

'It must be the green room, my dear,' said Clara, making an inroad into the 'study'—how little had I dreamed, two months earlier, of such learned retirement!—where I sat penning the first sermon I was to preach in the little pulpit of Oakleigh Parva—'it must be the green room, my dear. No other will do at all.'

I was called back from the Lamentations of Jeremiah by this address, and smiled as I told Clara I would 'leave it to her.'

'But do come, Philip—ah! but you must, to please me,' coaxed Clara, 'for no other room in the house will do for Sir Frederick, and this is such a nice one. Do come.'

So I did what any sensible man would have done under the circumstances, I laid down my pen, and obeyed.

The chamber alluded to was a very nice room indeed; it was on the first floor; it was large and airy, considering the antiquity of the house; and it had three windows, half hidden by the ivy without, but on which the yellow sunbeams fell pleasantly.

'A south aspect, Philip,' said Clara magisterially—'you know Mr. Richard Staunton was so very particular about a south aspect for his nephew's apartment.' The windows looked on the pretty garden, where the birds were singing their spring hymns already, and whence in due season the sweet scent of all the profusion of old-fashioned flowers would mount to this favoured chamber. They faced due south, and commanded a fine view. The room was well furnished, having a tremendous mahogany four-poster of the Georgian epoch, silk curtains, and plenty of chairs, chests of drawers, and toilet-tables, a big pier-glass, and a soft carpet. No other room in the house had so many presses and cupboards; no other room in the house was so handsomely appointed. It was really, as Clara remarked, too pretty for the abode of a bachelor and a stripling.

'And yet, Philip dear, there is no other that I can think of. The red room where we sleep faces east, you know; and the children's nursery would not do at all; and the blue room and that with the pink roses on the walls are too shabby and small; and, in fact, nothing but this will serve. See what a rich paper too, and how well it matches that lovely carpet and the curtains!'

It was a handsome paper, dark green in colour, but not sombre, being of a rich deep emerald hue, and of what is called 'velvet flock,' the most costly and elaborate of all papers. I quite agreed with my wife that we could not possibly put our delicate pupil in any other room than this; and it was accordingly resolved that the green chamber should henceforth be known by the style and title of Sir Frederick's room.

It was in good order, or would be so when a few purchases, such as a shower-bath and the like, had been made. But the bell-wire proved to be broken, and we had to get it repaired as best we might.

There was, of course, no bell-hanger in Oakleigh Parva, and none in the neighbouring village of Brambridge; but in Brambridge there was a blacksmith, who could, at a pinch, execute the desired repair, and I gave the necessary instructions to this descendant of Tubal Cain.

'Umph!' said the man; 'very well, sir. And so 'tis here the young Sir is to sleep: rather he than I, that's all I know.' And the smith whistled a few bars as he unstrapped his wallet of tools. My curiosity was piqued—I asked for an explanation; but Jonathan Brown, shoeing-smith, was not willing to be communicative. He only growled out that 'luck was luck,' and that 'a most o' folks' had died, to be sure, in that chamber, on which some thought the 'old monk's curse lay special heavy.'

An old woman of the village proved more garrulous; she explained that the prior of the little monastic community, having been expelled with violence by the Stauntons, under warrant from King Henry VIII., had laid a solemn curse on them and theirs, on the acres left from the monks, and on the parsonage, which was to be given to a heretic incumbent. It was still firmly believed by the more superstitious villagers that at irregular periods the shadowy form of a ghostly monk, in cowl and robe of serge, passed noiselessly through the vicarage house and the haughtier mansion of Staunton Dene, blighting those he breathed upon, and that death never failed to attend his boding presence. Several deaths had occurred in the green chamber in particular, chiefly those of young members of the family, and for the most part blooming girls, who had faded and pined under 'the curse,' until their dim eyes had looked their last at the emerald-tinted walls.

I did my best to keep these fantastic rumours from coming to Clara's ears, lest they should alarm her. For myself, I was rather annoyed than impressed by them. I was not by any means of a superstitious turn of mind, and I quietly set down the legend as an absurdity unworthy of a second thought. We were very, very happy at Oakleigh Parva: my wife recovered her good looks and sunny smile, both of which had become rarer than in her early life, and the children soon grew rosy and plump of form, and thrived wonderfully. Our new home, indeed, might have satisfied the cravings of much more fastidious folks than we were. The people about us, though ignorant, were generally well disposed and grateful for any little kindness. It was such a pleasure, to Clara in especial, to meet with smiling faces and good-humoured nods and ducks of welcome at the cottage thresholds, that we felt as if we were among old friends again. So the spring melted into summer, and on the last day of June our charge arrived.

Sir Frederick's personal appearance surprised us at first. We had, of course, sketched an ideal portrait of the young baronet, gifting him, equally as a matter of course, with very light hair, very blue eyes, a feminine delicacy of feature, and a sickly pallor. The real Sir Frederick was a tall, dark-haired stripling, with a grave and handsome face, rather sunburned, but by no means indicative of a tendency to phthisis. I could not at first comprehend why Mr. Staunton should be so very urgent on the score of his nephew's chamber having a warm aspect, since, so far as I could tell, the young man's lungs were as sound as my own. He was slight of build, however, and by no means robust; but what puzzled me most was the air of reserve, so unusual at his years, and which was quite free from that awkward shyness so common with striplings. Sir Frederick was reserved to a degree that chilled the warmth of our reception of him, and, though perfectly polite, gave an unpleasant impression of being continually on his guard. He was accompanied by his travelling tutor, a gentleman whose connection with his pupil would terminate from the moment of his arrival under our roof. This

tutor, whose name was Peters, and who had been appointed by Mr Staunton to his present post, appeared a dry, hard man, who did his duty mechanically, but no more. He consigned the young baronet to our care with much the formality of a conscientious messenger giving up the custody of valuable property, and I half wondered whether he would not end by asking me for a receipt for Sir Frederick Staunton. However, after dinner, and declining our offer of a bed, Mr Peters took a cold farewell of his late pupil, and rattled off in his post-chaise.

That evening was duller than we had expected. Sir Frederick's reserve did not melt, and his cautious manner and chilly politeness threw a damp over us all. I am wrong, though, when I say all; Emma and Kitty, whimsical as children often are, took very kindly to this cold-mannered stripling, refused to be daunted by his grave looks, and tyrannically demanded that he should look at all their picture-books and playthings, besides extorting a promise that he should tell them some 'pretty stories.' It was very odd. There was Mr Richard, talkative, bland, and beaming benevolence at every word, and those graceless little damsels had refused to be friendly with that admirable man; his nephew arrives, melancholy, grim, and taciturn, and the little witches take a fancy to him at once, and coax him in some marvellous manner of their own, into a smile that seemed rare on his bronzed face.

But Clara and I were not very well pleased. My wife had been preparing to be so good and motherly to the sick boy, to humour him, to coax him into health, and to bear patiently with his whims and probable peevishness, that she felt terribly snubbed by the cold and distant courtesy of our young guest. She pronounced a private opinion that the late Lady Staunton must have brought him up most injudiciously. She thought him 'haughty.' I could not pronounce so positively on his character; he was a problem to me.

When Sir Frederick retired to rest, of course I went upstairs to see if he was comfortable, and to ask him how he liked his room, which he had not yet seen. He cast a quick glance round it, and I saw him shiver.

'You are cold?' said I, and indeed the day had been rainy, and I recollected that Sir Frederick had spent most of his life in Italy.

'Not exactly cold,' he answered musingly; 'but I seemed to know this room. Strange! I suppose I dreamed of some place like it, or I may have seen its likeness in travelling.'

I did not catch the drift of this, but I expressed a hospitable hope that the young man had everything he wanted.

'Everything, thank you. I have been brought up very plainly and quietly, and shall not, I hope, give much trouble. I am afraid I am putting you to inconvenience by occupying so large a room.'

To this I rejoined that his uncle had expressly stated his wish that he should have a room with a southern aspect, and of good size.

'Ah!' said the young baronet with a singular expression, 'so this apartment was Mr Richard Staunton's choice?'

And he shivered again, so that I could do no less than offer him a fire. This he declined; but as he kept harping on the subject of his late question, I told him that, so far as I knew, Mr Staunton had never been at Oakleigh Parva, or at least into the upper story at the parsonage-house, before, but that he had been particular in bespeaking a large room and south aspect for his ward. Here I could not help adding some warm expressions of eulogy on that noble benefactor, who had rescued me and mine from poverty and unwholesome air; but I regretted to find that Sir Frederick by no means partook my enthusiasm.

'Is he at Staunton Dene, at present, Mr Harper?'

'Whom do you mean?'

'Mr Richard Staunton.'

I replied that he was not there, and that the last letter I had received from him was dated from the Highlands.

'You have not, I believe, seen much of your uncle?' said I.

'Not much. Now I am his ward, I shall perhaps see more,' said Sir Frederick drily; and we parted for the night.

The next morning found our new charge the same as ever, cold, civil, and shrinking from any approach to intimacy, but with a kind smile and a kind word for the children. Only the latter circumstance, I believe, prevented Clara, who was very impulsive, from absolutely detesting our guest. The little ones, as I have said, took to him from the first, and so did a big spaniel about the house, which had been left behind by the Rev. Gideon Thrump, now bishop of Calicut. But the servants were evidently afraid of him, probably on account of his precocious gravity and the chilly polish of his manners. He was very well-bred, having mixed, though sparingly, in the best foreign society, and had nothing awkward or hobbledehoyish in his bearing. His abilities seemed very good, and his information far from scanty. He had travelled and observed much, had read many books, and conversed with many eminent persons; and though his remarks were characterised by great modesty, I felt as if my pupil were in many respects ahead of his master.

But I could not fathom his nature. He was tractable enough, and readily opened his books, and submitted to an examination in his classical proficiency, but when I suggested an expedition to Staunton Dene, to have a look at the old Hall which must ere long be his home, he quietly declined. I pressed the point, less from curiosity, than because I had a wish that he should benefit by air and exercise.

'No, Mr Harper, I would rather not. I will not cross the threshold of that old house—much as I cherish a childish recollection of it—until I enter as its master, if ever I do so.' And with these words he turned abruptly away.

Clara and I now agreed that pride, a false, perverted pride, was the true key to the character of this unhappy boy; and I thought it my duty to read him a long lecture on this score, as well as on his evident insensibility to the kindness and affection of his estimable guardian and uncle, Mr Staunton. He listened to me with perfect equanimity, and then said, with a smile of, I will say, a most provoking character: 'Have you quite finished, Mr Harper?'

'Quite,' said I sorrowfully.

'I am obliged for your good intentions. Do you happen to know the amount of the rental of the Staunton property?'

'About fifteen thousand a year, or nearly sixteen,' said I, much surprised. 'But pray, why do you ask?'

Sir Frederick did not seem to hear or heed my query.

'Fifteen thousand a year, or more,' he muttered abstractedly, 'and large accumulations, I suppose. The stake is a high one. Many a man has sold his soul for less.'

And he sauntered off in a way that I could not but feel excessively unbecoming and insubordinate, considering our positions as tutor and pupil. I did not get on very well with my charge. My wife was still less pleased with him, and took little pains to conceal her displeasure. She cared sedulously for his comforts, but as a matter of duty, and we both felt that his presence in the house was distasteful and wearisome. Yet he gave little or no cause for open complaint. He was very courteous to both Clara and me; uniformly kind to the children, who were his staunch friends; kind to the servants, who took an unaccountable

fancy to him; kind to the dog, whose whole allegiance was transferred to him. He read as much or as little as he pleased, and at other times he went out alone, on horseback, or on foot with his fishing-rod, and sought the loneliest and wildest nooks in the countryside.

Mr Staunton sometimes wrote to inquire tenderly concerning his nephew's health and studies; and when I wrote in reply, I always asked Sir Frederick if he had any message to send, but his answer was always a negative.

There seemed to be some charm in this strange young man, visible to every one but my wife and me, for soon the villagers began to speak with praise to me of 'young Sir Frederick,' and to express bright hopes of the time when he should have the control of his own property. Then, too, I heard for the first time what was surely a calumny, that Mr Richard Staunton was a hard landlord, mercilessly stern in exacting the last farthing due, no matter what might be the misfortunes of the tenant.

Very strange that; but Clara and I agreed that duty, and a care for his nephew's interests, must be the ruling passion with our benefactor. One day, Clara overheard the children whispering some garbled fragments of the legend of the ghostly monk who was rumoured to haunt the parsonage. They had heard an old woman, Dame Bright, tell it to Sir Frederick when he stopped to chat with her at her cottage-door. Now it was this very Dame Bright from whom I had heard the weird tale, of which Clara had hitherto known nothing. Clara, who was gentle enough in general, was very angry now; she was indignant with Sir Frederick for 'frightening the children with ghost-stories,' and vowed to give him a hearty scolding. But the scolding was deferred, for my queer pupil did not come back at his usual hour, did not come back to dinner; and when he did return at dusk, he was fatigued, wetted through by a storm of rain and hail, and so haggard and wretched of aspect that the chiding words died away on Clara's lips.

'Dear me, how ill the poor boy looks!' exclaimed my wife, as the white, wan face of our guest glanced past the open door. 'Do, Philip, make him drink something hot, and change his clothes at once. It's enough to kill him.'

And Clara, instead of scolding Sir Frederick, ran to bid Susan get a hot bath ready, and warm the bed in the green room.

The next morning came, and the bell rang for prayers and breakfast, but no Sir Frederick Staunton appeared. I went upstairs, and found the young man very ill and feverish. The doctor was summoned, and the doctor came; not a very learned doctor, perhaps, but of very wide practice in a thinly peopled country—a surgeon named Gooch.

'Ague, not a doubt of it,' said Mr Gooch, when the diagnosis was complete.

'Ague! You think so?' said I anxiously; and Clara, who was always in terror of scarlet fever and measles, for the little ones' sake, echoed me.

'Think so? sure of it,' said the surgeon. 'I've been five-and-thirty years a practitioner, and I ought to know. Pooh! my dear madam, no danger—none. I'll set him on his legs again in a jiffy.'

And with this pledge, confidently spoken, off cantered the doctor; and presently the doctor's boy came over on his ambling pony with medicaments. Of course I thought it my duty to communicate what had occurred, by letter, to Mr Staunton. I told him Sir Frederick had been caught in the rain, that he had a slight attack of ague, that all possible care should be taken of him, and that the experienced surgeon of the district felt confident of a speedy cure. I added, to calm Mr Staunton's natural anxiety, that I would soon write again.

I did soon write again, but not, alas! to communicate any tidings of a reassuring nature; Sir Frederick

was very ill indeed, and fast getting worse. Mr Gooch looked serious and puzzled. He would not admit that he had been wrong about the supposed ague, but he owned that there were singular and peculiar symptoms in the case, and that his experience was at fault.

'He doesn't eat opium, eh?' said the surgeon mysteriously, holding me by the button.

'Opium?' said I; 'certainly not; of course not.'

'Nor take quack nostrums? nor smoke too much Cavendish, eh?'

I answered that Sir Frederick did not smoke, and that I believed him guiltless of the practice of swallowing empirical remedies.

'Umph!' said the doctor, knitting his brows, and scrambling into his weather-stiffened saddle again. The next day he was very minute in his inquiries as to the health of the family and domestics, and, to my no small surprise, insisted on making an incursion into the kitchen, and inspecting the saucepans, the tea-kettle, and all the rest of the culinary apparatus. But whatever he was looking for, he seemed baffled. He pumped himself a glass of fresh cool water, sipped it, eyed it like a connoisseur examining the beeswax in old port, and set down the glass with a sigh.

'Umph!' said the surgeon again, and off he went with Care riding behind him on the spavined old bay. That night, Sir Frederick was delirious.

Dame Bright, a notable person, half nurse, half charwoman, had been sent for at first to attend on the patient, since our maids were inexperienced in a sick-room; but on the particular night on which the youth's reason began to wander, Clara avowed her firm intention to watch over the sufferer herself. My little wife was very soft-hearted, and I believe her conscience smote her at the idea of having been angry with and averse to this poor friendless lad, and she insisted on tending him in person. Clara was a capital nurse; and I could not but consent to her undertaking the duty, only bargaining that on the second night I or Mrs Bright should take her place.

Be that as it may, Clara came down, with a very white face, to call me from the study, where I sat, a little after midnight, busy with letters and accounts. The house, of course, had been long hushed, but I could not bear to rest when Clara was wakeful and busy. My wife's pale cheeks startled me.

'Come, come,' she said; 'I am frightened. The poor boy is saying such dreadful things in his delirium. He says—(here Clara began to sob)—he says we are butchers, and this house a shambles, and his uncle—only he never calls him his uncle—was a murderer from the beginning, and a Judas, and the father of lies. Come, come; it is shocking.'

I went. The poor young man was tossing to and fro in a violent paroxysm, rolling his head on the pillow, and stretching out his lean hands, as if to keep off some imaginary foe. His great eyes looked terribly hollow and bright; they glared meaninglessly: it was plain that he did not recognise us.

'Back, keep back!' he moaned: 'I knew you from the first, smooth-tongued fiend that you are. He chose the room, mother, he—Richard Staunton. Nurse Bright saw him come to the empty house, and stand long in the open window of the accursed room, and grin—grin like a wolf, as he is—when he thought no eye was on him.'

Here the feeble voice died away in murmurs.

'Gracious me, Clara!' said I, wiping my forehead, on which great drops of sweat gathered, 'this is very horrid—shocking. Go down, love; this is no place for you.'

'Hush! listen,' said Clara suddenly.

'So many have died here,' moaned the sick lad; 'the room is full of shadows. There is a curse on it. The monk walks—ha! I saw him—he breathed on me, and his eyes glittered under his cowl, and his breath was icy cold—cold. That was a dream; but

the eyes made me tremble—they were Richard Staunton's eyes. How he hates me! I stand between him and wealth—the broad lands and the gold. Mother, mother, you did well to warn me, well to mistrust him; you read Murder in his eyes—long ago—beside my cradle.'

Then the sufferer gasped for breath painfully. I tried to persuade Clara to go; she refused. I looked at her attentively by the dim light: in her face was written dismay, consternation, but no blank horror; on the contrary, there was a dawning intelligence that perplexed me.

'Hush! lose not a word,' whispered my wife; 'perchance Heaven permits that we should defeat a crime.'

'Can you suspect?'—I began.

Clara pressed my arm. Sir Frederick began to talk, first very vaguely, and in broken scraps of foreign tongues, then suddenly he broke into the cry of a sick child: 'Take me away—to the pure air—away! away! I stifle here; I cannot breathe. I shall die—I shall die!'

Clara tenderly adjusted the pillows under the sufferer's head, and gave him some cooling drink. The poor fellow spoke no more, but groaned and tossed for a while, till the hot clutch of the fever relaxing for the moment, he sank into a light slumber. Clara led me out of the room on tiptoe, and with her finger pressed on her lips. There was an air of mystery, almost of terror, in her comely face.

'Philip—husband, do not lose one moment; get the best advice.'

'My dear,' said I hesitating—'Mr Gooch'—

'Mr Gooch is a dunce!' cried my wife impetuously. 'What is wanted now is the judgment of some great doctor, whose knowledge and talent enable him to see what Mr Gooch is blind to. Do send for Dr T—— at once.'

'My dear,' said I quite startled, 'Dr T——! why, what will Mr Staunton say?'

'Never mind what he may say,' returned Clara, obstinately pursuing up her lips; 'get Sir Frederick's horse saddled, ride as quick as you can to Minchcombe, and telegraph for Dr T——.'

I complied with Clara's wish, though with some misgivings. My telegram was soon replied to by an announcement that Dr T——, one of the most eminent professional men of the day, would arrive at Oakleigh Parva within twelve hours. By the time the great London doctor arrived, Sir Frederick was worse. The delirium had returned again and again, fever fits had torn the patient, deadly chills had assailed him, and Mr Gooch, who was very sulky when he heard of the summons to Dr T——, feared the worst result. Curiously enough, Clara, whose general health was very good, was by this time nearly knocked up: she complained of violent headache, giddiness, and so forth, and was twice compelled to relinquish her post at the bedside of the sick boy from sheer exhaustion.

'It is very odd, dear, but I feel as if the room itself were a vault. The atmosphere seems stifling. I suppose it's all silly, nervous nonsense,' said my brave little wife.

Dr T—— arrived when the patient was in a delirious paroxysm, raving wildly and incoherently. He heard what we had to tell, felt Sir Frederick's pulse, looked in his face, and exchanged a few sentences with Mr Gooch. Then he turned to the bed, and seemed to listen intently to the sufferer's broken words.

'He is talking sad stuff, doctor; not a grain of sense in a bushel of it,' said the gruff surgeon.

'I differ from you, sir, on that point,' returned the doctor blandly; 'the instincts of a patient are not to be safely slighted. Much that we, in the pride of intellect, are accustomed to close our ears to, may prove a revelation of the utmost benefit to science.'

Mr Gooch growled out something very like an oath, and stumped off.

'Good-bye, Mr Harper,' said he; 'I'm no use here, now that mealy-mouthed "new light" is come from town. I wish you a good-evening.'

Dr T—— had his instruments and chemical apparatus, contained in a little Russia-leather case, without which he never travelled, placed in the chamber, and begged to be left alone with the patient. He did not disguise his apprehensions—a crisis must soon take place. Clara and I went down stairs to await in my study the next announcement of the physician. It was a sultry summer's night, and the air was heavy and still. We sat talking low, till the pale light of early morning came upon us like a ghost. An hour after this, Dr T—— came down stairs with a smile on his good-humoured keen face.

'Saved?' cried my wife, catching the look of contentment with feminine quickness.

'I hope so,' said the doctor; 'but you must move him at once. Any other room will do; but no time is to be lost. I have found out the real phantom-monk, the true destroyer that haunts your best bedroom.'

'What?'

'Arsenic!' said the doctor, exhibiting some powdered matter of various shades and tints, from dark green to pure white—'arsenic enough to poison a regiment. That rich emerald green paper on the walls is stained by its means, and contains poison enough to be the death of generation after generation. I misdoubted it from the first. It has given me a headache, and is no doubt the cause of Sir Frederick's strange symptoms, and of the many untimely deaths that fatal room has witnessed. See—I have analysed different portions of dust, brushed at random from the wall.'

We sat mute and thunderstruck. The doctor resumed: 'Such things are common, too common. But if it be true, as I hear, that Mr Richard Staunton virtually chose this apartment for his sickly nephew's habitation—that Mr Richard Staunton deliberately planned to give this benefice to a total stranger, of gentle and unsuspicious nature—pardon me, my dear sir—on the very unusual condition, that he should take charge of the young heir, and lodge him in that envenomed den—if Mr Richard Staunton is, as I am told, a subtle chemist, and has an interest of sixteen thousand a year in the death of a nephew whom he has notoriously hated from the cradle; why all I can say is—'

'What?'

'That Mr Richard Staunton is not far behind the Borgias and Brinvilliers of old days,' returned the doctor dryly.

I sat stunned by the magnitude of the enormous wickedness, suddenly revealed to me as by a lightning flash.

'I feared it—I feared as much. The poor lad said in his ravings that his mother had always suspected her brother-in-law, always—and that is why I would make you telegraph to London for Dr T——,' said my wife, weeping on my shoulder.

I have little more to tell. Sir Frederick, removed to another room, skilfully attended, and well nursed, recovered, though very slowly. I felt it my duty to resign the living, given as it had been by a wicked hand, and for an evil end. So I and mine had to go forth from the pleasant country home, once more to do battle with the world and poverty. We did not suffer much from this sacrifice to conscience. Sir Frederick, who had, as he owned, suspected us at first of being his uncle's instruments, now became our fast friend, and never scrupled to own that he owed to us, under Heaven, his escape from the greatest of earthly dangers. He was now out of peril. Mr Richard Staunton was a cautious man, and when some powerful though distant connections of the Staunton family, after hearing the doctor's statement, offered their house to be the young baronet's home until he should be master of his own lands, the guardian gave his

consent. The heavy suspicions under which Mr Staunton lay were merely hinted to him, but that hint was enough, and he was silent and discreet.

And it so happened that the very year succeeding that which saw Sir Frederick Staunton come of age, old Dr Dozey died; and my former pupil presented me to the comfortable living of Bullingdon, where we have spent many and many a happy year since the events here narrated.

THE LOUNGER IN THE EXHIBITION.

THE SOUTH COURTS AND GALLERIES.

The International Exhibition, which has so long been oscillating between failure and success, has at last been accepted by the national mind; it has accomplished for itself what neither Commissioners nor Guarantors could ever have accomplished for it: it has become familiar in our ears as a Street-word. 'Has your mother sold her mangle?—Who is your hatter?—Did you ever send your wife to Camberwell?' have all had their day, and been forgotten; and the sarcastic inquiry: 'How are your poor feet?'—addressed probably, at first, in piteous earnest by some female excursionist for her companion after a day's work in the eastern annexe—is now reigning in their stead. This is a genuine test of popularity, but one which our foreign visitors, who are made, of course, the particular subjects of the inquiry, cannot in the least understand. 'These English,' M. Assolant will now be confessing, 'are not so brutal and unsympathetic, after all. They ask us after our poor feet.'

If your poor feet are very bad—if you feel as if you had been almost 'walked off your legs' in the Exhibition, permit me to recommend you to visit the Court of Civil Engineering and Building Contrivances, to the south-east of the nave; there are comparatively few sight-seers to be found there, and although you will not be so sanguine as to expect vacant benches, many of the models therein exhibited are of sufficient strength to bear you. There is a fire-escape, for instance, which has ample accommodation for one in the bag at its foot, and I have not seen it thus occupied more than half-a-dozen times. In one year, more than one hundred and fifty human beings have been saved from death by fire by machines of this description, which reach, by the addition of upper ladders, to a height of seventy feet. Another element is evaded by the diving apparatus opposite, at the sight of which little boys cling to their mothers' skirts, and shriek aloud, under the impression that they are in the presence of a water-bogie. The Drinking Fountain here is ingeniously provided with metal cups, that hang bottom upwards, so that when the drinker has satisfied his thirst, the cup must needs be emptied. The Reversible Windows are also worthy of adoption, which admit of their being cleaned without the necessity of female servants sitting half within and half outside of an upper story, with nothing to save them, if they fall, from being dashed to pieces but the iron points of area railings. Among the numerous maps and models of railways here, there is a specious-looking plan for that railway tunnel under the British Channel which we trust never to see except on paper; while a gigantic model of the Tudela and Bilbao railway across the chain of the Cantabrian Pyrenees, exemplifies the latest and one of the greatest achievements of modern science.

Adjoining this department, dedicated to the safety or convenience of human life, is the Naval and Military Court, whose motto should be, 'Killing no murder.' Never has the ingenuity of man been exercised for the destruction of his fellows with such success as at present. No such fatal fruit ever grew on poison-tree as hangs here on the tree of Armstrong ordnance, containing such specimens of cunning handiwork as the world never saw till now. The vent-pieces are

gauged to the 1-1000th of an inch, and so perfect are the rifling machines, that it is stated they can copy a signature in the bore of a gun. The mighty models of the gun-carriages might, for finish and delicate perfection, be drawing-room ornaments, and the travelling-carriage in which the 10-inch mortar takes the air is worthy, indeed, of so great a gun. In strange contrast to these giant weapons, there are miniature revolvers that could lie in the waistcoat-pocket, and pistols so inlaid with the precious metals, that they seem only fit for regicides to take the lives of kings. The electro-gilt double-barrelled guns, ordered, for presentation, by the Council of India, are admirable examples of the combination of splendour and utility. Nor are the inventions for slaughter more numerous than those for healing the sick and tending the wounded. There are models of ambulances and of every description of field-stretcher that is in use, from the dhoolies of Hindustan—those 'ferocious dhoolies,' which, in the course of Warren Hastings' impeachment, were accused of carrying off the wounded from the battle-field—to the Maltese carts, so cleanly looking and comfortable, that one would almost welcome a slight flesh-wound, as an excuse for lying down in such agreeable quarters. There are here, too, life-size models of soldiers, which, all unreal as they are, yet attract the fair sex, as a painted fly-catcher the flies; these are exhibited to instance some projected improvement in uniform; but this is by no means generally understood. 'After a lengthened trial at Hythe,' the beginning of a eulogium upon a certain knapsack, affected one compassionate servant-maid almost to tears; she thought it referred to a court-martial, by which the poor fellow, whose effigy she was contemplating, had been condemned to death for the revolutionary sentiment (perhaps), 'Free arms and a free chest,' inscribed upon the placard he bore. There are tents, also, of all sorts and sizes fitted up so agreeably with stoves and hammocks, that dwelling-houses seem quite a mistake compared with them.

The Court of Naval Architecture is even more interesting than its military neighbour, without, however, being in all cases quite so intelligible. The horizon is a subject that admits of considerable perplexity. An 'artificial horizon' is calculated to puzzle most minds, but when we come, as we do in this department, upon 'Mrs Taylor's Artificial Horizon' (without one word of explanation), the intellect rather collapses. Floating-docks are a spectacle apt to be seen more clearly with the physical than with the mental eye, and the same may be observed of horizontal patent propeller direct-acting steam-engines. The ship 'with iron passage to allow missiles to pass through her,' is also problematical, and only reminds the Unscientific of the Irish shoes that were originally made with holes in them to let the water out. About the life-boats and the life-belts, however, there is no such difficulty, and the models of Light-houses appeal successfully to the humblest intelligence: the storm-swept sea and the driving ship rise before us as we look at them, and the light that shines out upon the lonely rock amidst the world of waters; we admire the skilfulness of the builder who could have set up so strong a tower in such a place, and the neatness of the solitary home so strangely located, and, above all, the dutiful care that never suffers the saving-lamp to be quenched or to grow dim. There are models, too, that illustrate the entire history of ship-building, from the days of Henry VII. until now—from the clumsy magnificence of the *Great Harry*, down to the hideous but useful shield-ship of Captain Cowper Coles. The fine old ships that Nelson loved are doomed to extinction; but the British sailor, let us hope, half-stoker, half-gunner though he may become, and with his 'Shiver my timbers' exchanged for 'Splinter my iron sides,' will be perpetuated still. The romance of the sea, however, as Dibdin and Marryat described it, has fled for the present; the occupation of the midday

and the sailor-boy may be said to have gone ever since Self-reefing Sails were adopted.

Returning to the north-easterly courts, we find ourselves in a grove of leather; saddles of 'honourable mention' and splendid horse-furniture are there sufficient to supply all Rotten Row. There are examples of stalls and stable-fittings supplied with such comforts and conveniences as are lacking, alas! in many a poor man's home. In the Sheffield Court there is every description of hardware, from inlaid and exquisitely mounted skates for ladies, to razors that would cut your throat for you 'as soon as look at you'—or, at least, as quickly as they would reflect your image; fire-grates of all descriptions, elegant and rich, or chaste and classical; stoves like Temples raised to Vulcan; and kitchen-ranges which seem made of metal most attractive 'to young persons about to marry'—and furnish. The more prudent of this class are always to be found here, more or less, purchasing tea-trays so charmingly painted that it seems a shame to put anything on them, and coal-scuttles all too fair for the office for which they are intended: the more extravagant of them, on the other hand, dally in the neighbouring Glass Court, where their loving looks are reflected in all directions. Here are crystal dessert services, tables as frail as they are fair, centre-pieces so costly and delicate that one wonders how footmen can be found to take the responsibility of handling them, lustres which seem of themselves to emit light, and ice-pails cold and frosty even without their refrigerating contents. Perhaps the simplest of the dessert services is that which was sent out to the Canadian government for the use of the Prince of Wales during his visit, engraved with the maple leaf which is the emblem of Canada. There are some simple and elegant centre-pieces, adapted for wild-flowers and creepers, which form very beautiful and uncostly ornaments. The Prismatic Mirror, on the other hand, is an example of the magnificent effects which are commanded only by excessive wealth. The contents of the Potteries' Court are very various, from certain gigantic and weird shapes in earthenware almost big enough to live in, but the uses of which are unknown to the present writer, up to the loveliest ceramic statuary. The porcelain dessert services, the Parian statuettes, the 'sets' for domestic use—from the dinner-plate with drawings by Phiz to the Paul Potter tray—are each and all worthy of attentive consideration. There is nothing more artistic and beautiful in the International Exhibition than the contents of these last two courts.

The Process department is always very densely thronged on the shilling-days, there being a thirst for practical information among the humbler classes that does not exist in the higher. The people who smoke most pipes and use most needles are very anxious to see how pipes and needles are made. The sewing-machines are ever surrounded by an eager throng of females, with the crudest notions of machinery, but with very distinct ideas respecting domestic economy. The Patent Covers for Family Jars, which, in these days of divorce courts and public disclosures, should surely be socially invaluable, are handled and admired by ladies whose generic likeness to Mrs Poyser it is impossible to mistake. The copper-plate printing and lithography are almost too magical and wondrous for the majority of these visitors, who watch it speechlessly, and retire from the process as if spell-bound; but the india-rubber balloon-making is charmingly palpable, and its results are immediate and satisfying. The Falstaff Punch that 'outdoes Blondin by crossing the Channel without a rope,' is probably the object which will be most firmly imprinted on the retina of 'the young people' of anything in the Exhibition, unless, indeed, it be the fountain of perpetual motion, which, compounded of air, and glass, and water, seems to have been imported from Fairyland for their especial entertainment.

The Court of the Precious Metals exhibits a potentiality of wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. If all is not gold that glitters there, it is silver or aluminium at the least. Here most do congregate 'the upper ten thousand,' in front of this or that jeweller's store, only kept moving, slowly and unwillingly enough, in front of the coveted treasures by the monotonous commands of the policeman. Jewels, however, are to be seen rather than to be described. We are now, too, in the region of Art, where dictation (according to the present writer's notions) is an impertinence. You may like your Venus tinted or untinted, plain or coloured, without interference or reprobation from me. I will venture to say positively, however, that the Pandora is not, as is supposed by many, taking snuff from the box she carries. The Egyptian sculpture in relief, here, illustrates, of course, that famous 'cheque received by Pharaoh on the Bank of the Red Sea crossed by Moses and Company,' but I cannot say why the Red Sea has not been tinted red.

If you enter the crowded pavilion entitled 'Rome' here, you will find the atmosphere in accordance with the supposed locality, and if you do not covet, at least must envy the statues, cool, white, and marbly limbed, that cannot perspire, and have no pockets to be picked. The Cleopatra is perhaps the finest of these. But if you want to behold the Pygmalion miracle reversed, and living woman turned to stone, enter the pavilion to the south-west, where sits the Reading Girl by Magni of Milan. She is evidently poor, but no princess ever looked less vulgar. She is reading of the sorrows of her native land, and a tear has fallen from her eyelid. In the same chamber is a very pretty piece of sculpture, artistic, classical, chaste, and all the rest of it, an excellent likeness, doubtless (if one could but verify the resemblance), of the Psyche it portrays. But in the case of the Reading Girl it is not Art but Nature herself which holds so many all day around her chair.

As you enter the French Court from the south-east, you are greeted characteristically enough with perfumes and music; a repository of scents is before you, and on your right hand a collection of musical instruments, including a monster sax-horn (forty feet high), invented to prove that magnitude and volume do not at all fatigue the player, however they may overpower his audience. The gilt furniture here is also somewhat emblematical of the country from which it comes; it is showy rather than solid, and splendid and 'stagey' without any great degree of comfort. There is other furniture here, however, unsurpassed for magnificence and taste by any in the building; while there are imitation bronzes and other ornaments for the drawing-room as cheap as they are beautiful, which bid us bless the mere

Mechanic skill

That stamps, renews, and multiplies at will;
And cheaply circulates through distant climes
The fairest relics of the purest times.

Wherever there are things in this Exhibition exceptionally expensive, though not always exceptionally beautiful, we are informed by a placard appended to them that 'the Pacha of Egypt is the purchaser, and has ordered two more.' He has carried away five hundred pounds' worth of gilt Lion (life-size) from the west transept; the ugliest vehicle in the world from the carriage department; and from these French courts a negro and negress, bearing chandeliers, who have not overstepped the modesty of nature by too much clothing. It is a wonder that he has not insisted upon purchasing the centre-piece designed for the banquets of the Hôtel de Ville at Paris, and had it carried on board his yacht to adorn its luncheon-table. To anybody else, this magnificent ornament would be a little oppressive; nor would it be easy to partake of a chop and a pint of porter in the presence of such stately splendour. A sea of plate-glass, surrounded

by a frieze of gold, bears upon its unruffled bosom a ship with a statue emblematical of the city of Paris. The genius of Progress lights with flaming torch her course at the prow, and Prudence (by a charming piece of satire) is represented as steering her. Liberty is doubtless hovering somewhere above the allegorical group, but at present she is invisible.

Among articles of apparel here, there are gloves so exquisitely embroidered that it would seem as though the arts of luxury could no further go, until presently we come upon some men's braces similarly ornamented, and trimmed—only conceive it—with swan's down! The artificial flowers, feathers, and fruits are not to be distinguished from those of nature, any more than is the string of manufactured pearls, price L.4, from the genuine string beside it, valued at L.1100; while there is a certain vineyard the blooming fruit of which, would, I am sure, be pecked at by the birds, were it out of doors. The triumph of art, however, culminates here in the Gobelin tapestry. The idea of a beautiful painting, which even the best tapestry conveys, and is intended to convey, is lost through the perfection of the work; the mind overlooks the intermediate process altogether; the ingenuity and fidelity of the copyist do not suggest themselves. We gaze upon the Assumption as though it was Titian's own—executed from his divine imagination with a needle and thread. If you asked me (but not unless) that common question: 'What is the finest production of art in the Exhibition?' I should reply: 'The Reading Girl.' If you asked me, 'And the second?' I should answer: 'The tapestry in the French Court.' The church furniture here (and especially the clothing for the priests) is, as might be expected, of a very gorgeous kind; the operative decorations, too, are equally splendid—and as one would imagine, but for the absence of a policeman in their neighbourhood—equally genuine. A new and pretty fashion—that of painting drawing-room candles—is prevalent in this court. It would be waste indeed to burn them, but how ornamental to keep them in their sticks during the daytime, and replace them by the ordinary wax or composition when the time comes for lighting up. This is surely a wrinkle—and the only one, I hope, they will have—for the young people 'about to furnish.' An allegory of the Exhibition in gold and enamel will not fail to attract the eye of the visitor; but he will probably resist the temptation of becoming its purchaser, the 'price of cost,' as its placard superfluously informs us, being L.6000. The imitation majolica china here, with the raised fishes and eels already occupying its dishes, is not to be distinguished from the ancient specimens in the Kensington Loan Collection; but there are other imitations more peculiarly French—an Aquarium, the sole recommendation of which, one would think, consists in its being a *Vivarium*, is represented artificially; the 'wonders of the sea-shore' being merely cunning imitations of the same: there is also a large and well-executed statuette of Rebecca at the Well—entirely composed of sugar!

But that which attracts the largest crowd in this or any other court, and which even fills the gallery that commands a view of them, is the mechanical toys. The cock that crows not only in the morn, but at any other time that seems good to its proprietor; the hare, with head so critically on one side, who strums the tambourine; the artist of a foot high, who plays the fiddle with such perseverance; and the creature, genus unknown, who throws the shuttlecock over its own head. Miserable are the children, dejected are even the grown people when the fatal words, 'The hare will not perform to-day' are stuck up, as they often are, above that often-ailing quadruped. It is supposed that the delay in the passing of the Night Poaching Bill has affected his nerves. In close proximity to these curious animals are the imitations of the feathered creation; birds that chirp

and twitter and hop from branch to branch with a naturalness not to be questioned. A more ambitious example of mechanism still is a piano, the tones of which are fed, so to speak, by a succession of boards, toothed like the wheel of a musical-box, and placed above it by hand. It has this great advantage over the piano, and indeed over every other instrument, that one can calculate exactly when it is going to stop.

With a glance at Spain, characteristically flimsy and childish, with its veils and shawls, and highly coloured models of bull-fights, the visitor will conclude his tour of the south courts. A walk through the carriage department will then not be unpleasant, if it is only for the comparatively free space it is sure to afford him. At the eastern end of this he will find himself in the United States department, the meagre contents of which can be alone accounted for by the unhappy condition of that country. It contains an ingenious machine for milking cows, by which that tedious transaction can be effected in less than a quarter of the usual period. The treasury of the northern states is being subjected to the process at the present time.

It is perhaps upon a just principle of compensation, and to prevent the Exhibition being too one-sided in its interest, that, while the contents of the south courts are by far more attractive than those of the north, the south galleries are stocked with comparatively uninteresting things. There is scarce anything but 'goods and stuffs' in the whole range of them, and duplicates (including one of the Universal Clock) of what is to be found below. The only point of attraction is, indeed, the anatomy department: *gnoli cravro*—make yourself acquainted with what is inside you—appears to be a sentiment animating all minds. People say 'How horrid,' but they nevertheless pervade this scientific butcher's shop unceasingly. Among the least dreadful things in it are the artificial limbs and eyes, which beckon and stare at the astonished spectators from all sides. There are dépôts of these eyes, it seems, all over the world, 'the colours in the collections being adapted for persons inhabiting northern climes, as well as for the natives of tropical regions.' A one-eyed emigrant might therefore start from Europe with—let us say—a black eye, and change it for a more convenient tint upon the various stations upon his route. 'Those who wish to procure an artificial eye by correspondence, need but to state the colour, and send a photograph of the patient's full face; he will then receive what he requires in course of post, 'with natural and expressive movements.' It seems to us, however, that the character and position of the portrait should be also stated; for conceive a staid divine embarrassed with a too expressive eye which winked (however naturally, and the more naturally so much the worse) at the ladies of his congregation!

There is only one place which we have now omitted to visit—the Educational Department, between the British and Foreign Picture-galleries, which contains also the best specimens of photography. The stairs that lead to it are steep, and drew forth a passionate expression of opinion from one lady in my hearing, who carried a good-sized infant, that 'there ought to be a place to leave the babies in, the same as the umbrellas;' but when they are once surmounted, we are repaid for our labours. A case full of British birds with their nests and eggs—placed each in the locality wherein they are usually found—cannot fail to delight all who see it, from the school-boy to the naturalist. A magnificent owl, with its wings outspread, and really looking very formidable, next demands the gravest attention, and excites our curiosity by its 'And Son' written above it, to discover the Son—which, however, refers to the bird-stuffer. Further on, is a most complete though small collection; a rock inhabited by a number of different birds has

at its foot a pool, in which moorhens and king-fishers are represented diving and fishing, while over the whole hovers a hawk with outspread wings. In the Educational Department there are bibles printed in many tongues—such as Catchee or Cutchee, for instance—of which the European visitor has probably never so much as heard. A curious model of the life of the street-boy Reformatored, is to be seen here; in the beginning, he is picking pockets, and describing 'wheels' upon his hands and feet for pennies; but afterwards, through Ragged Schools and other reformatory influences, he earns a respectable position for himself in life, and finally emigrates to certain happy hunting (and fishing) grounds, where he certainly seems to enjoy himself. Here, too, are books for the blind, and certain raised maps, excessively ingenious, constructed for their use, which impress one cheerfully with the activity of philanthropic enterprise. A little beyond these, there is one of the finest treats in the Exhibition, but of the pleasure of which, alas, the blind can never partake. A collection of admirable photographs presents to all the finest scenes of this beautiful land, and reminds many of happy summer days spent amid the scenes themselves. These landscapes, transported bodily by the magic of Art, and brought into the din and steam of town, are indeed things to be thankful for. They touch the sacred fountain of tears as potently and far more universally than any poem. They even console, so long as he looks at them, the gazer 'in city pent,' for his enforced absence from those breezy fields, those foaming brooks, those woods in which light and shade never cease their glorious struggle. Above all, there are some photographs from the sea-side which only require the sea-air and the briny fragrance to make the illusion complete; as we stand in the hot room amid the roar of the streets, with our eyes in the stereoscope, we feel indeed as if we were far away from any such place. We are on the wet and pebbly beach that shimmers in the sun, while the retreating foam-topped wave yonder is gathering strength once more to regain its territory. The far-spreading ocean lies before us specked with sails and sea-gulls, as is the sky with clouds. Or we stand upon the moonlit shore when all is calm and still, and the almost waveless sea laps on the crag. In the International Exhibition there is much to thank Art for, which God has permitted to do such great things for Man; but we thank her for nothing more gratefully than for this wonderful process by which she has actually brought home to us nature herself.

The loungings of the Lounger in the Exhibition are now ended; 'a mighty wind ariseth roaring seawards,' and he goes. May all his fellow-visitors to Brompton enjoy likewise some holiday by the side of the sea, whether they visit costly Scarborough or humble Gravesend; whether they swing in their own carriages behind the swift express-trains northward, or patronise 'the parliamentary,' and take their 'eleven hours at the sea-side for three shillings.'

A MIGRATORY TOWN.

WHEN I landed at Bombay, it was what the Ducks—as the Bombayites are termed—called the cool season; that merciful interval of respite between the immense heat and stifling sultriness of the hot weather and the deluging rains, rheumatic damp, thunder, lightning, and unwholesome atmosphere of the monsoons. Our passage along the coast of Malabar had been an exceedingly delightful one, favoured as we had been with the almost clock-like precision of the land and sea breezes; so that we stood off the shore every day at daylight to catch the first cat's-paw of the sea-breeze, and about mid-day would stand in again before a rattling sea-breeze that bent the gallant mast. This method of procedure varied the monotony of a sea-voyage most pleasantly.

There was abundance of pomphret and other fish to be hooked with our lines when we were far off the land; and as we neared it again, the ever-varying beauty of the panorama along the coast was an inexhaustible fund of excitement and pleasure. Now and then, too, an old dhoney, laden down to the water's edge, would creep past us, bound from Goa to Cochín or Calicut, and these carried mostly a great variety of passengers—sometimes an English lady with her children and retinue of ayahs and amahs; sometimes half-a-dozen rascally young cadets come out *viâ* Bombay, and destined to join regiments along the coast; and sometimes Portuguese priests and laymen, one of whom was sure to be a fiddler, and would scrape away earnestly as we passed, to cheer us on our journey. So we sailed along, until we sighted the light-house, and were boarded by the pilot; and then, amidst melancholy mementoes, scattered here and there upon the rocks and along the coast, of shipwrecked vessels, from many of which not one soul had escaped alive—as in the case of the *Lord William Bentinck* and the *Castlereagh*, lost in the same spot within twelve hours of each other in 1840—we came to a safe anchorage in the commodious harbour. Landing upon the handsome pier, and jumping into the first hack-palanquin that presented itself, I gave the hamals or bearers the name of my friend, and they forthwith transported me to his residence on what is called the fort esplanade.

The esplanade is a pleasant sloping grassy mound, jutting for some distance into the bay, and almost terminating in the harbour pier. The centre is traversed by a very good carriage-road, which branches off to the left (coming from the pier) towards Colabah, and on the right leads to the fort. On the left-hand side, and bordering upon the sea, I found the house of my friend—one of a cantonment of some forty or fifty, as I conceived, elegantly constructed bungalows. That they were permanent residences, I felt fully assured, because, although not on an extensive scale, each house had a compound or garden which marked its limits, and separated it from its next neighbour. Arriving from the Madras presidency, I was very much struck with the neatness and precision with which these compounds were walled in and the gardens laid out. The entrance-gates looked like a thick brickwork, covered with the rough chunam or lime used commonly in India, and the walls were apparently of the same material. So also the carriage-road leading to the door of the house was walled in on either side; and in thick profusion, arching themselves over, grew the graceful feathery-leaved bamboo. Behind these were growing an immense variety of ornamental or fruit-bearing trees. There was the common and the China orange in blossom, or laden with fruit; the luscious mango, indigenous of its species to the Bombay presidency, and unrivalled in flavour in any other part of India; the mallea-poo, the jasmine, the pomegranate, and the pommulose tree or shaddock, the loquat, the bellunby, the calacca, and the beautiful roselle: all these were flourishing in wild profusion in the compound; whilst in parterres and borders, under the shelter of the pundal or verandah, blossomed a variety of fragrant flowers, including many European exotics. Up the poles that supported the pundal, the incomparable Indian passion-flower intertwined itself with the yellow jasmine, the honey-suckle, and the tube-rose; and their combined fragrance was something exquisite to inhale in the cool of the early morning. These gardens, thought I to myself, do great credit to the constructors and occupiers of these houses and compounds. Everything about seemed so substantial and flourishing, so permanently delightful, that I quite envied my friend the eligible site he had chosen for the construction of that home where the years of his manhood would, in all probability, be consumed.

If the compounds were well arranged, the bungalows themselves were as tidy and compact as toys just taken out of a toy-case. They were none of them very extensive, and not in a single instance more than one story high, but they stretched themselves out like a suddenly crushed spider; and off the central room, or hall, which constitutes breakfast, dining, and supper room, there branched off a marvellous number of short narrow passages, that opened out into airy and pleasant dormitories, or terminated in the library, the music-room, the godowns or store-houses, and, first in dignity and importance, the ice reservoir—that acmé of Indian luxury which British and American enterprise have successfully achieved, transporting miniature icebergs, from latitudes where such things are common, to places where ice was never even conceived of, wrapped up carefully in swaddling-clothes of blankets, and old straw, and shavings, and conveyed on shore under the midnight sky.

The manner in which the walls were painted, and the floors covered with elegant and cool rattan or Chinese mats; the elegant furniture, the harp, the piano, the library, and, sloping down to the seabeach, the miniature kitchen-garden; the poultry-yard, with its fractious nanny-goats, whence came the supply of milk for our morning coffee—a dreadful old hag, with one eye, and a nose-ring as big as a baby's hoop, driving a milch cow up to the door of an afternoon, to supply our wants for tea—all these combined, I say, seemed to speak audibly of permanent comfort and stability.

Neither was the esplanade cantonment devoid of those general features of European civilisation which are always introduced when a few English families settle down, if but for some transitory months. In the mornings, the gentlemen strolled along the seabeach, until they came to some convenient sandy cove, where all indulged in the indescribable luxury of an Indian sea-bath. The ladies had chatties of seawater supplied at home. Then came the incomparable Indian breakfast, whereat everybody, even including the invalids, looked cool and comfortable; with the butter and the fruit enveloped in fresh leaves, and the table interspersed with fragrant bouquets, with the chuhues, the curries, the fried fish, the prawns, and—ineestimable boon—in the centre of the table a huge vase of sparkling fresh water, in which floated or bobbed up and down large fragments of ice. The Parsee servants were perfect models of their class, so white their garments, so shiny their bronzed features, so well starched and speckled their singular head-dresses or turbans. Towards the cool of the evening, the hot and imprisoned inmates of the fort, the sojourners at Mazagong and Becullah, the leviathans loading in the harbour—all these disgorged their contents on to the esplanade, to mingle, some on horseback, some in carriages, some afoot, with the local aristocracy of the esplanade cantonment. Thither also came alternately the bands of Her Majesty's and the native infantry regiments on the station, and added the enchanting link of music to all the other attractions existing around; so that it was with a heavy heart that I took leave of mine host to join my regiment at Jaulnah *rid* Poonah, secretly hoping, though I hinted nothing of the sort, to spend such another month or six weeks in the same pleasant quarters at some future day. I little thought then how soon, and under what very different circumstances, I was destined to visit the spot again.

In the very height of the south-west monsoon, amidst torrents of rain and storms of wind, with every discomfort that saturated clothes, hunger, and fatigue could supply, I found myself riding down the Mazagong road towards the esplanade somewhere about twelve o'clock at night, comforting myself and assuaging my miseries with prospective glances into

what I considered as certain shelter and comfort nigh at hand. The moon rose as I passed the statue raised to Clive or Cornwallis (I forget which), at the further extremity of the esplanade, and it rose upon a silence and solitude more horrible than I ever remember to have contemplated in my life before. Not a vestige of a house or a garden, not a human being was to be seen. Where the pretty cantonment had existed, were bald patches of soil, interspersed with puddles, the rank grass growing high on either side. Frogs in myriads croaked a requiem to the departed town, and utterly confounded, I turned my horse's head towards the fort gate, and challenged the sentry.

After the usual preliminary questions and answers, I asked him what, in the name of fate, had befallen the cantonment—had an earthquake swallowed the whole place up.

'Is it the houses on the esplanade ye'll mane? Dade, then, they are moved higher up to the hills.'

Although this response puzzled me not a little, it threw a glimmering light upon the mist of my understanding. Through the captain of the main guard, I got admitted into the fort, and so to the hotel, and there I discovered what, but for the habitual inertness and lassitude which India engenders, I might have known long before, that the whole of this esplanade town was a migratory affair; that the houses were of wood, and could be packed away neatly into appropriate cases; that every separate tree was planted in a square box; that every separate box almost jointed into the other; and that some fifty bullock-carts and half-dozen elephants carried house and garden hither and thither, as the means and inclination of the proprietor dictated, and as the seasons varied in the presidency of Bombay.

OUT OF REACH.

To love thee, and be dumb. Never by look or word
To break the silence set upon my soul:
To crush the voice that struggles to be heard:
Unmoved, to gaze on the forbidden goal.

To stand within the vestibule of Bliss:
To grasp alone the shadow of Delight:
To see and feel, but never taste of Peace;
Daily to live in an eternal night.

Awake, to dream of Love's undying song,
With expectation near akin to pain;
To hear its echoes as they float along,
But ne'er to catch its full melodious strain.

To sit and look into thine eyes, and yearn
To tell thee all my closely hoarded thought;
And still to know that I must calmly learn
To meet thy gaze, and yet to utter nought.

To watch the earnest smile upon thy face,
And picture joys that never can be born;
Or gem the Future with thy gentle grace,
As weepers decorate the dead they mourn.

To know there is no hope. Hourly to feel
That Destiny forbids a word—a breath:
This bitter fate is mine, until the seal
Is broken by the welcome hand of Death.

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